National Reconnaissance Office
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NRO & Australia DoD Successfully Launch NROL-162 from New Zealand

First of Two Consecutive Missions Planned for July

CHANTILLY, Va. — The National Reconnaissance Office successfully launched the NROL-162 mission aboard a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from Rocket Lab Launch Complex-1 at Mahia Peninsula in New Zealand July 13, 2022 at 02:30 EDT (06:30 UTC).

NROL-162 is the first of two NRO missions in partnership with the Australian Department of Defence (AUS DoD) scheduled to launch from New Zealand in 9 days. NROL-199 will also launch aboard a Rocket Lab Electron rocket from Mahia Peninsula, currently planned for July 22.

"The NRO works with allies and partners to identify and advance common goals," said NRO Director Dr. Chris Scolese. "This collaboration with Australia bolsters our partnership and strengthens the foundation for future coordination as we work to secure and expand our intelligence advantage in a competitive space environment."

The NROL-162 and NROL-199 missions will demonstrate NRO's capability to launch multiple rockets from overseas locations within days of one another. This speed and agility are critical as NRO innovates faster working with government partners to keep the world safe and secure. NRO worked closely with New Zealand Space Agency, which licensed the launch, and Rocket Lab as the launch provider.

"No launch can succeed without the talent and dedication of the people on the ground," said Col. Chad Davis, NRO's director of the Office of Space Launch. "The teams from Rocket Lab and the New Zealand Space Agency demonstrated outstanding skill and dedication in getting this mission into orbit, and I am confident they are up to the challenge of doing it again soon."

NROL-162 carries a national security payload designed, built, and will be operated by the National Reconnaissance Office in partnership with AUS DoD. NRO missions provide critical information to more than a half-million government users, including every member of the Intelligence Community, two dozen domestic agencies, our nation's military, lawmakers, and decision makers. NRO capabilities provide the foundation for America's advantage and strength in space.

NROL-162 & 199 launch services were acquired using NRO's Rapid Acquisition of a Small Rocket (RASR) contract. RASR enables the NRO to explore new opportunities for launching small satellites through a streamlined, commercial approach. The first two launches under the RASR contract flew from New Zealand in 2020.

Since 1961, NRO has pushed the envelope of U.S. space-based intelligence collection with boldness and ingenuity. Today, NRO's innovative legacy continues to thrive as it develops, acquires, launches, and operates the world's most capable intelligence satellites. NROL-162 will strengthen NRO's ability to provide a wide-range of timely intelligence information to national decision makers and intelligence analysts to protect the nation's vital interests and support humanitarian efforts worldwide.

Additional information on upcoming launches will be made available at NRO.gov/launch.

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The NRO is the leader in developing, acquiring, launching, and operating the nation's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites to secure and expand America's advantage in space. We are is building a diversified and resilient architecture of spacecraft and ground systems designed to meet the challenges of a changing space environment by accelerating innovation and leveraging strategic partnerships, backed by a diverse and highly skilled workforce. At the NRO, we See It, Hear It, Sense It so our nation's leaders and policymakers have decision advantage amid increasing global competition.
Learn more at NRO.gov.